



West Zone - Trail Working Group (TWG) Meeting

Meeting Notes

Meeting Date:	Wednesday, April 26, 2017, 6:00pm-8:00pm Mathias Township Community Building, E 2997 State Highway M-67, Trenary, MI 49891
Meeting Purpose:	To connect representatives from each trail activity group with forest employees to identify opportunities to improve the trail user experience across the forest.
Participants: Forest Service	Paul Holeva, Nancy Roseman
Representatives	Over Snow Vehicle – Keith Lynch ATV/ORV – Tim Kobasic, Raino Maki Biking/Snow biking – Rhonda Lassila Hiking/ Cross Country skiing/Snow shoeing – Denise Gerth Equestrian – Karen Bahrman Camp Cooks Task Force – Steve Gondek

Discussion Notes

Welcome address – Paul Holeva, Recreation and Lands Program manager.

Comprehensive Trails Analysis Trails Working Group Meeting – presented by Paul Holeva, Recreation and Lands Program Manager

Roll Call

Agenda

- Welcome
- FACA vs Collaboration
- Forest Objectives
- Round Robin/Updates
- Scheduling
- Questions/Public Comments

FACA vs Collaboration

- The differences between a FACA Committee and a Collaborative Effort were discussed. There were some questions from the Representatives regarding the benefits of one over the other and what were some specific examples of a FACA Committee. Paul used the Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) as an example. The RAC is responsible for approving user fees for Recreation Site visits.
- Tim Kobasic briefly discussed his interaction with the Collaboration Cadre that is currently talking with community members who partner with the Forest Service. The representatives wanted to know if the Collaborative Cadre could impact or change how



the Trails Work Group is managed. Paul stated that the Forest Service's objective is to develop long term, sustainable relationships with all trail user groups and that it is unlikely that any recommendations made by the collaboration cadre would result in any formal changes to the current format or structure of the Trails Working Group.

Forest Service Objectives

- Public Feedback on Forest Trails System
- Sustainable Ideas for Trail Updates
- Better Communication between the various trail activity groups across the forest.
- Comprehensive Trails Plan that addresses the needs of all Forest Trail User Groups

Proposed Timeline

- April 2017 – TWG Kick-off Meetings
- Summer/Fall 2017 – Zone TWG Meetings
- December 2017 – Final TWG Meeting
 - Presentation of Comprehensive Trails Plan

Round Robin/Updates

- Each member of the Group introduced themselves and gave a brief description of their background and their interest in this group. They also stated their preference for meeting location and frequency (monthly). Raino Macki mentioned that he will be unavailable on Wednesdays from May through November.

Scheduling

- There was consensus among the Group that they would like to meet monthly at the Mathias Community Center in Trenary and they would like the Forest Service to act as the coordinator.

Questions / Public Comments

Q: Can we self-organize and become a FACA group?

A: FACA groups controlled by congressional authorization and are typically established based on formal legislation/appropriation. Political action would likely be required before a FACA group was established to support trail management on the forest. Such action is likely outside the control of the forest.

Q: Will all of the proposals require the same level of NEPA?

A: No. We can do an assessment to determine the level of review and analysis required for each project in the comprehensive trails plan.

Q: Can the Forest Service articulate what activities can function as multi-use?

A: "Multiuse" can vary by trail. Each trail has a specified Trail Management Objective (TMO) which identifies the standards that the trail will be managed to, and what the authorized uses are. The potential combinations for a given trail are numerous. The Forest Service supports multi-use when appropriate for all user groups.



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- Q: Could the Moss Lake Motorcycle trail be used for cross country skiing or other winter activities?
- A: It is possible but would require sustainable winter access to the trail head (roads and parking lot not currently maintained for winter access) and any grooming/winter trail maintenance that may be required for the proposed winter activity. The Forest Service would definitely entertain proposals that leverage existing infrastructure for additional uses on different seasons.
- Q: This is the *Trails* Working Group; when we talk about trails does that include routes and roads?
- A: Potentially. Proposals could include using existing infrastructure and could simply involve adding signage and/or changing the designation. We will not discuss non-rec road closures.
- Q: Are the Wilderness Areas and Kirtland Warbler Habitat, or other areas that are hot spots marked on the maps?
- A: Wilderness areas are currently marked on the maps. We can try to get some better information on Kirtland Warbler habitats, and any other reoccurring intermittent constraints.
- Q: Are we constrained by the current Forest Plan mileage limitations?
- A: The F.S. is considering amending the Forest Plan. However, we can't add unlimited mileage. We need to think about sustainability. Try to use existing infrastructure in your proposals. Think about eliminating underutilized trails or converting them to a different use. Be mindful that there are legal and policy limitations to use, especially in Wilderness Areas, etc.
- Q: Do you have a list of approved signage that the Forest Service uses?
- A: We can get that information for you.

Meeting Recap

- TWG Member List, Document and Updates will be posted at the following location:
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/hiawatha/workingtogether>.
- The West Zone Forest Service Coordinator
Brenda Rebitzke, (906) 474-6442 x119

Meeting Adjourned at 7:48 pm

List of Handouts

- West Zone Trail Maps were made available to each representative.

Action Items

- Nancy Roseman will scan the ATV/ORV Map of proposed routes in the morning and contact Tim Kobasic when the original copy is available for pickup. It is likely that Raino Maki will pick it up sometime next week.
- If any of the User Groups have copies of recent trail proposals in the past few years they should bring them to the group for consideration. All members should submit their proposals at least 1 week in advance of meetings so that the Forest Service can scan maps in and make them available to the TWG members prior to the regularly scheduled meeting.



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- The Forest Service will try to get a digital copy of the Trail Sign Guide posted on the website.
- The Forest Service will post maintenance level descriptions on the website.
- We need to add MDNR personnel to our mailing list so that they are invited to our monthly meetings.
- Equestrian and Biking will present their proposals at the monthly meeting in May. Please submit your proposals at least one week in advance so that we can post your proposals to the website for the group to review prior to the meeting.



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